(a) whether it is fact that the Indo-Myanmar border through Moreh is down from Rs. 57.53 crore in 1997-98 to a dismal Rs. 5.48 crore in 2000-01, and to Rs. 10.65 crore in 2004-05;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the illegal border trade is nine times the legal trade;

(c) if so, whether Government have mady any investigations in this matter; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to conduct trade through mutually agreed system of freely convertible currencies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The Indo-Myanmar border trade through Moreh was of the order of Rs. 62.37 crores in 1997-98, Rs. 18.11 crores in 2000-01 and Rs. 11.61 crores in 2004-05.

(b) and (c) Reports have been received about illegal imports and exports through Moreh during the past few years. The anti-smuggling unit of customs is taking steps to check smuggling on the Moreh border and the value of contraband seized after investigations amounted to Rs. 0.41 crores in 1997-98, Rs. 3.44 crores in 2000-01 and Rs. 2.43 crores in 2004-05.

(d) Apart from the border trade facilities available for export and import of specific commodities through designated border trading points, facility for normal trade regime under India-Myanmar bilateral trade is already available through freely convertible currencies.

Doubling of Indo-US bilateral trade

2745. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and the US have agreed to set up initiative to double bilateral trade to $ 50 billion over the next three years;

(b) whether any action plan was discussed by the Commerce Minister with the US trade representative, in June, 2006;

(c) if so, whether the plan includes infrastructure investment programme, that would give India opportunities, incentives and challenges in power, roads, ports and airports;

(d) whether both the countries have asked one another to lift barriers, to push two-way trade in goods and services; and

(e) if so, to what extent both India and US have taken decisions in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) In the first Indo-US Trade Policy Forum Meeting held in November, 2005 in New Delhi, both sides had agreed that India and US will aim at doubling bilateral trade to at least US $ 40 billion by 2008.

(b) to (e) The Third Ministerial level Trade Policy Forum (TPF) Meeting Co-chair by Union Commerce and Industry Minister and the United States Trade Representative (USTR) was held at Washington DC on June 22,2006. Steps to address sanitary and phytosanitary issues (SPS), tariff structures, emission standards were discussed in this meeting. During the meeting both sides agreed on a number of initiatives to strengthen and deepen the bilateral trading relationship. Among the various decisions taken, India and United States agreed to initiate a Bilateral Infrastructure Investment Programme that will focus on identifying investment opportunities, incentives and challenges in key infrastructure sectors.

MFN status to India by Pakistan

2746. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the position regarding grant of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status by Pakistan to India, after ratification of South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA);

(b) whether Pakistan has put forward certain pre-conditions, before grant of MFN status to India; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) India has granted Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to Pakistan, but Pakistan has so far not granted MFN status to